Surah Fatehah

The Heart of the Qur'an- The Essence of Islam in Seven Verses

Surah Fateha

Its Name

According to the prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), Surah Al-Fatihah is considered as “the greatest Surah” of the Quran

THE POPULAR NAMES OF SURAH AL-FATIHAH ARE THE FOLLOWING:

* Al-Fatihah (The Opening) – It is named Al-Fatihah, the Opening – because it opens the Book and by it the recitation in prayer commences.

* Umm al-Quran (Mother of the Quran) – According to At-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “The chapter commencing with] “All praises and thanks are due to Allah.

The Lord of the Worlds” is the Mother of the Quran, the Mother of the Book, the Seven Oft Repeated Verses and the Great Quran.” Ibn Jarir at-Tabari said that it was named so because the meaning of the entire Quran is summarised therein. The Arabs named anything that concisely su mmarises something or comprises its most important part, Umm, or Mother.

* Umm al-Kitab (Mother of the Book) – Al-Bukhari said in the beginning of the Book of Tafsir in his Sahih: “It is named Umm al-Quran because it is the first chapter written in the Quranic texts and the recitation in prayer commences with it.”

* Sab’ul-Mathani (The Seven Oft Repeated Verses) – It is also named Sab’ul-Mathani, the Seven Oft Repeated Verses, because they are frequently recited and indeed recited in every rakaah of the prayer.

Allah SWT says in the Quran:

"And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven of Al-Mathani (the seven repeatedly recited Verses), (i.e. Surat Al-Fatiha) and the Grand Quran. [Quran: Surah Al-Hijr (87)]"

* Al-Hamd (Praises to Allah) – It is also named Al-Hamd, the Praise, because it contains mention of hamd just as Al-Baqarah is named so because it contains mention of the cow. Some scholars also gave the reasoning that Al-Hamd comprises heart of Al-Fatihah.

* As-Salah (The Prayer) – It is named the Prayer because its recitation is a condition for the validity of the prayer.

* Ash-Shifa – It is also named Ash-Shifa', the Cure, due to what Ad-Darimi reports on the authority of Abu Sa'id that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "The Opening of the Book is a cure to every poison."

* Ar-Ruqyah – It is also named Ar-Ruqya, the Spiritual Cure due to the hadith of Abu Sa'id reported by Bukhari that after he had recited it to cure a person who had been bitten by a scorpion, the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) asked him, "…And what made you to know that it was a ruqya."

REVELATION OF SURAH AL-FATIHAH

It was revealed in Mecca as stated by Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Abu'l-Aliyah.. It is also postulated that it was revealed in Madinah as stated by Abu Hurayrah, Mujahid, 'Ata ibn Yasar and Az-Zuhri. It is also said that it was revealed on two separate occasions – once in Makkah and once in Madinah.

However, the first opinion is the most likely due to Allah's saying, "We have sent to you the Seven Oft Repeated Verses." [Al-Hijr 15:87] This verse was revealed in Makkah.

THE MEANING OF SURAH FATIHAH

- In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
- All the praises and thanks to Allah, the Lord of the Alameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists).
- The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
- The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)
- You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).
- Guide us to the Straight Way
- The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray. [Quran, Surah Al-Fatihah]

- THE RULING OF RECITING SURAH FATIHAH IN PRAYER
- The opinion of the majority of the scholars, amongst them Malik, Ash-Shafi'i and Ahmad, is that it is obligatory to recite Al-Fatihah in the prayer and that the prayer is invalid without it.Their opinion is based upon many proofs; from amongst them, the sayings of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), who said that "There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book."

- COMPOSITION OF SURAH FATIHA
- It consists of seven verses and there is no difference of opinions concerning this.

The Fatiha is built upon the themes, Action and Knowledge. The Surah begins with knowledge and ends with Action (as I will elaborate later). At the beginning we are introduced to Allah, and our relationship with Him and we conclude with the supplication to turn our knowledge into actions. The Surah also concludes with us asking Allah to prevent us from being of those who know yet act wrongly

(*Maghdub*) and from those who do not know better and as a result act wrongly (*daal*).

- THE VIRTUES OF SURAH FATIHA

- There are a number of hadith explaining to us the great virtue of this surah. They are summarised as follows: Allah responds to the believer when he recites Surah Al-Fatiha.

- Sahih Muslim records on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (R) who said that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said,
  “Allah, the Glorious and Exalted said, “I have divided the prayer between Myself and my servant equally and My servant shall be granted what he asked for.”
- Therefore, when the servant says, ‘All praises and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds’, Allah says, ‘My servant has praised Me.’
- When he says, ‘The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, ‘Allah says, ‘My servant has extolled Me.’
- When he says, ‘Master of the Day of Judgment,’ Allah says, ‘My servant has glorified Me.’
- When he says, ‘You Alone we worship and Your aid Alone do we seek,’ Allah says, ‘this is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he requested.’
- When he says, ‘Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favored, not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray,’ Allah says, ‘this is for My servant and My servant shall have what he asked for.’
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Explain the terms = Anamta / Al-maghduub / dualeen

Surah An-Nisa No.4, verse 69 has introduced these people, thus:

"All who obey Allah and the Apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, -of the prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of Truth), the Witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! What a beautiful Fellowship!"

Al-maghduub / dualeen

From traditions we learn that those who have earned His wrath are those knew the Scripture; who had read in their Books about the coming of a Last Messenger and his description, yet they concealed the truth (meaning the Jews).

Who have gone astray? Those who are not in search of the truth. Those who have known what is right, but their weaknesses have led them far away (meaning the Christians).

In the last *ayah* of this beautiful Surah there is a lesson for each one of us; anyone who knows the truth but hides it has earned Allah's anger and anyone who is not in search of truth may go astray. We beseech Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* to save us from following the path of such a person (or nation). We don't want that path Ya Allah, save us from treading in their footsteps. Aameen Ya Rabbil Alameen.

This Surah, The Opening, in comparison with other Suras of the Qur'an regarding its tone and melody, has a particular style which is, clearly different and extraordinary.

The other Suras contain instructions from *Allah,* Who gives commands and cautions to His servants, but, in this Surah, His words are uttered on behalf of the servants. In other words, in this Surah, *Allah* has taught His servants how to supplicate and speak to Him, simply and without a mediator.

The basis of Quran:

It is narrated that the holy Prophet (S) has said:

"By the One, in Whose hand is my soul, Allah has not sent down a similar Surah to this Surah (Al-Fatihah), neither in the Turah, nor in the Gospel, nor in the Psalms, nor even in the Qur'an and it is Umm-ul-Kitab"; which means that it is the basis and origin of all excellence.

In fact, besides referring to the Resurrection, this Surah presents facts concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence, Unity of Attributes, Unity of Divine Acts, and Unity of Worship. It is the essence of the whole meaning of the Qur'an.

It is narrated from Hazrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) that:

"All secrets of Allah are in Divine Books; and the contents of all those Divine Books are comprised in the Qur'an; and what is found in the Qur'an is condensed in Surah Al-Fatihah,

Importance of recitation:

The recitation of this Surah, because of its extreme importance, is frequently emphasized in Islamic traditions and narrations.

As for its virtue, it is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) that:

"The reward of any Muslim who recites the Surah 'Opening', is like that of a person who has recited two thirds of the Qur'an, and so much reward would he receive as if he has given every believing Muslim, man or woman, a free will offering ".

Conclusion

The seven short verses of Sura Al-Fatiha, thus, deal with the three important basics of Islam, **belief, worship and conduct**. When a Muslim believes that Allah is a God of mercy and justice, he worships Him lovingly and devotedly. With this love and sense of duty in mind and at heart, a Muslim disciplines his life and acts according to the instructions of his fair and loving Creator.

We must ask Allah for guidance sincerely, desperately. We have to feel the need for it. You don't ask for something you don't need. So, until you feel the need for guidance you won't really learn how to ask for it you and I both. We must feel that desperate need for Allah's guidance then we ask for it then Allah opens our heart to receive the message and wisdom of this Quran which is the guidance we are reciting throughout the year. May Allah accept our standing in salaah, may Allah open our hearts to receive His guidance and change our behaviour and our lives and lives of our family on account of it. May Allah enlighten our heart with the light of the Quran.